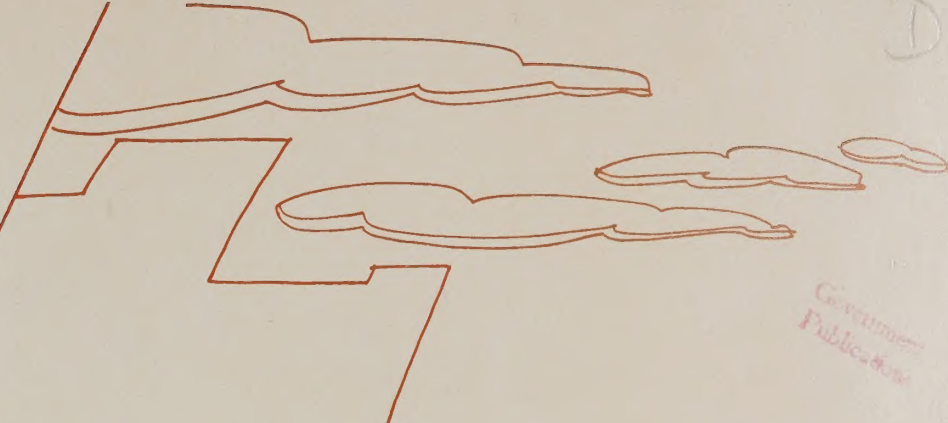


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metropolitan canada women's views of urban problems



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metropolitan canada women's views of urban problems

The present report is the product of the joint efforts of the consultants in nine Canadian metropolitan centres who made the research, the consultants who synthesized the separate research reports, and the responsible officers of the Urban Economy and Environment Group who coordinated this final report.

Ministry of State for Urban Affairs

Ottawa
December, 1975



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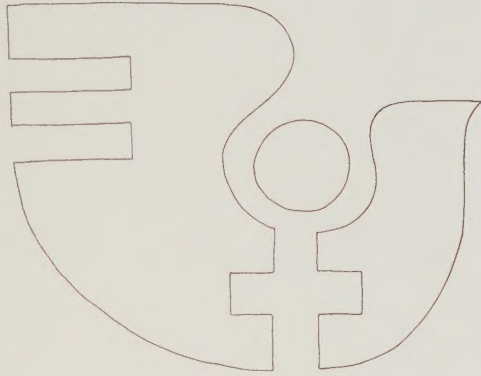
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preface



The quality of the environment in Canadian cities has been and continues to be a major preoccupation of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs. As the Ministry's contribution to International Women's Year, we tried to gain insight into women's perceptions of the quality of the Canadian urban environment.

To do this, we initiated a series of study projects in nine cities across the country. In each city, a consultant was asked to explore a number of issues of concern to women in that city and to submit a report. Perhaps inevitably, each of the reports reflected the unique flavour and style of the city and people involved. To help in the challenging task of synthesizing the separate reports, we engaged O'Staff and O'Staff Limited, a social planning research firm in Toronto. Working closely with officers of the Urban Economy and Environment Directorate, Policy and Research Branch of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, Sally and Ron O'Staff integrated the findings of the nine city reports and developed thirteen lifestyle vignettes of urban women to complement the more factual descriptions in the reports.

This final report represents, then, a summary and melding of the facts and ideas presented by our nine consultants, the overview and vignettes created by O'Staff and O'Staff, and the framework and analysis developed by members of the Urban Economy and Environment staff. Particular credit should

go to Odette L'Anglais, project coordinator, and to Tim Burton, chairman of a Ministry advisory group composed of David Belgue, Reg McLemore and Ruth Girard.

The unenviable task of coordinating and directing these efforts was effectively handled by Ms. L'Anglais, who also represented the Ministry in various committees and conferences which met during International Women's Year, and communicated the results of our work to them.

We should also note the important contribution made to this work by people who participated at all stages of the project: the many women and women's organizations who gave our consultants the benefit of their time and experience; the hundreds of women whose conversations with the interviewers of O'Staff and O'Staff Limited over the past few years provided the foundation for the profiles of urban women; and, of course, the consultants in each of the cities, without whose work this report would not have been possible.

We hope that the information, opinions and feelings expressed in this report will help women in Canada to share their perceptions of urban life. More important, we hope the findings of this inquiry, both in this summary and in the nine city reports, will help to identify concerns common to all Canadian city dwellers about the quality of urban life. On the basis of these and other findings we may begin to take the action necessary to improve living conditions in our cities for all citizens.

R. W. Crowley, Director
Urban Economy and Environment Directorate

chapter one: introduction



International Women's Year and the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs

In designating 1975 International Women's Year, the United Nations meant to focus world attention upon the many roles that women play in society and at the same time upon the need to offer women the opportunity to participate fully in all the activities of human society. The objectives of the International Women's Year program were: to improve the status of women in world societies; to promote equality between men and women; to foster changes in social attitudes towards the roles that women can and do play in society; to press for an end to unjust discrimination against women in all aspects of modern life; to make women more fully conscious of the wide range of career opportunities available to them in present-day societies; and to recognize and strengthen women's contributions to the economic, social and cultural development of modern societies.

When Canada agreed, early in 1974, to act as host for the opening of International Women's Year, to take place the following September, each department in the Canadian government was asked to undertake a special project to further the objectives of IWY. The Ministry of State for Urban Affairs decided that it would be appropriate to undertake a study which would attempt to identify women's concerns regarding the quality of urban life in Canada. Such a study would be of particular interest because, although it was known that there are more women than men in Canadian urban areas (98 men to every 100 women, according to the 1971 Census), women's views about urban life had rarely been reported. This is not to suggest, of course, that women's views necessarily differ substantially from men's views. The concern was, rather, to identify the specific concerns that women have about the urban environment, and to ascertain the extent to which women feel these views are being taken into account in urban decision-making.

What is the Quality of Life?

The meaning of the phrase "quality of life" is not easily arrived at. Although many writers, researchers, politicians and others have tried to find precise definitions of the concept, as well as the means to measure it, there is still no real consensus on the subject. To some, the quality of urban life has a primarily physical basis, and is concerned with such variables as housing, transportation, and air and water pollution. To others, social and cultural factors are of primary importance: educational opportunities, health and recreational services, and so on. For still others, it is none of these things directly, but has rather to do with a combination of factors which goes to make up lifestyles and lifestyle choices.

Given this lack of one generally accepted definition of the quality of life, we decided to give this study two separate, but related, thrusts. The first of these would focus upon individual components of the urban environment — physical, social, economic and cultural — and the problems which they create for urban women. The second thrust, in contrast, would focus on the development of portraits of the individual lifestyles of some of the women who live in our cities.

People and Places: Choosing Cities and Consultants

This study was initiated in June, 1974 with a research proposal which appeared in its final version in September, 1974. Contracts were issued to the nine consultants in January, 1975 to terminate in May, 1975. In addition to the nine city contracts, a contract was given to O'Staff and O'Staff Limited, in May, 1975, which ended in November, 1975.

For the first project nine cities were chosen, on the basis of the following criteria:

- (1) each city should be of substantial size — 100,000 population or more;
- (2) among them the nine cities should broadly represent all the regions of Canada;
- (3) in each city there should be at least one centre of higher education so that the consultants would have access to research facilities;
- (4) each city should have a number of active women's organizations.

Application of these criteria led to the choice of the following cities: Vancouver; Calgary; Winnipeg; London; Montreal; Quebec City; Saint John, N.B.; Halifax; and St. John's, Nfld.

Research outlines were sent to the universities in the nine cities and to various women's

organizations in each city,* soliciting their interest in the project and inviting them to compete for a contract to carry out a study in their city. The responses were analyzed, and a consultant or group of consultants was chosen for each city. (For a list of the consultants, see the Appendix, page 29.) It is interesting to note the diversity of the consultants with respect to background and interests. Three teams of consultants were affiliated with university research centres — in Winnipeg, Montreal and Quebec City. One, in Halifax, consisted of a consortium of five university professors. In London the consultant was a single professor assisted by a graduate student. Two cities, Calgary and St. John's, were represented by consultants affiliated with women's centres. Saint John was represented by a group of women who belonged to the YWCA. And in Vancouver the consultants were a group of professional women who had incorporated as the Women's Design Center.

The consultant for each city contracted to prepare a report relating to that city, for which the objectives were: to identify the principal concerns of women in that city relating to the quality of urban life; to describe and analyze current activities of women's organizations in the city directed towards improving the quality of urban life; to identify the agencies that deal with urban problems in order to examine the extent of women's participation in decision-making; and to recommend ways to increase the part that women's views and concerns play in urban decision-making.

*The women's organizations were identified through the cooperation of the Department of the Secretary of State, which maintains an inventory of women's non-profit organizations across Canada.

The reports produced by the nine consultants were the basis for the first part of this report. It has been our concern, however, not simply to reproduce the major findings of each report, but to synthesize them so that the reader may be able to make comparisons among the nine cities. Readers interested in obtaining copies of the report for a particular city may do so by writing directly to the consultant for that city (listed on page 29).

The Lifestyle Vignettes

In addition to the nine contracts awarded for studies of individual cities, a contract was given to O'Staff and O'Staff Limited to synthesize the information contained in the nine city reports, and to develop portraits of some of the lifestyles of women living in urban centres in Canada. None of these portraits represents an actual person, but each reflects characteristics and traits of hundreds of actual people who were interviewed by the consultants over the past few years; the kinds of problems, choices, frustrations and feelings that each faces can surely be found in almost any urban community in Canada.

Outline

This report falls into four parts. Chapter Two offers a brief discussion of the approach of the study and the limitations inherent in its sources and methods. Chapters Three and Four describe the major findings of the reports for the nine cities. Chapter Five presents thirteen lifestyle vignettes and, finally, Chapter Six offers some general comments on the results of the study and on the implications for urban policy and planning.

chapter two: nine times nine — sources and limitations

Our decision to engage a separate consultant for each city was prompted by the desire to have the work carried out by people with at least some familiarity with the city being studied. We recognized that there were dangers in this approach, particularly that it could be difficult to make comparisons among the nine reports. In an effort to avoid this problem, each consultant was provided with a set of rather specific guidelines regarding study procedures; more strict control of the consultants' work, we felt, might suppress the individual flavour of the case studies. In other words, we sought a reasonable balance between individuality on the one hand, and the need for comparability on the other. While the reports were indeed interesting and even provocative when viewed separately, they did not lend themselves easily to direct comparison. Each is, to a great degree, unique in its approach, style, emphasis and conclusions.

To illustrate, consider the differences among the consultants' sources of information. They indicate the wide range of methods used and, at the same time, give an idea of the limits of comparison. One of the consultants examined existing information written and published in Canada concerning women's problems, with special emphasis on local issues currently in print. This consultant also interviewed the leaders of a number of women's organizations and arranged discussions with municipal, provincial and federal agencies concerned directly or indirectly with urban decision-making. Another consultant held interviews with women in decision-making positions, and also interviewed women's action groups. Yet another consultant chose to interview the members of any organization in her city with the word "women" in its title. Current local issues were identified and the groups were asked for their opinion on these issues. Another consultant made a detailed analysis of Canadian written material pertaining to women's issues and then related this information to literature available in her city. Two other approaches involved interviewing women's action groups (made up mainly of middle-income and upper middle-income women) to identify issues to be examined; and sending a questionnaire to women's groups and associations, and to individual prominent local women, in order to further delineate current problems.

Differences arose, too, in the ways in which the various women's groups and individuals were approached and dealt with. In several instances the consultants focused only upon groups and individuals that responded to an initial letter or questionnaire. In some cases, the issues for discussion were chosen ahead of time; in others, they

emerged only during the course of the discussions themselves. In at least one case, nearly all the interviews and discussions were held with articulate, well-informed women who hypothesized about the problems of women in situations “less fortunate” than their own.

In short, the nine reports vary so much in both data sources and methods of study, that a true synthesis of the findings is impossible. To suggest that the differences reported in women’s attitudes in one city and another towards, for example, education, have scientific or measurable significance would be to do an injustice to the cities themselves, to the consultants and to the good name of research!

In other words, by not forcing the responses from individual cities to conform to a pre-determined framework, we have made the results of the study more difficult to tabulate, but at the same time, we hope, increased its value as information. The wide range of approaches has itself drawn forth a wider range of concerns than might otherwise have emerged, giving us a new understanding of the remarkable breadth of women’s concerns in Canadian cities.

In analyzing the information from the nine case studies, then, our concern has been not to draw direct comparisons — statistical or otherwise — among two or more cities, but rather to use the findings to illustrate the range and variety of perspectives that women and women’s groups have on urban problems. For example, the fact that the Vancouver report is the only one which addressed the housing problem from the perspective of single-parent families does not mean that the single-parent family has

housing problems only in Vancouver! It does reflect the particular concern of the groups that participated in the Vancouver study.

Chapter Three considers issues that emerged in all or most of the case studies; housing, urban development, women in urban decision-making, education, employment and daycare. Chapter Four focuses upon issues which emerged in only a few of the studies: leisure and recreation; transportation; and violence, vandalism, and crime.

A word should be said here about the development of the lifestyle vignettes. Real information about actual Canadian women was collected over a period of several years. The information was then assembled in imaginative ways to produce vignettes to illustrate a number of the lifestyles that are now in existence among Canadian women. Information for the vignettes was collected by O’Staff and O’Staff Limited, in the course of both social and advertising research over a period of several years. During this period they had the opportunity to meet women from across Canada and to discuss a great variety of concerns and issues with them.

This kind of research does not lend itself to strict scientific testing for reliability and validity. Its usefulness depends on the perceptiveness and sensitivity of those who create it and of those who make use of it. The vignettes are offered here as another way of looking at the quality of urban life for Canadian women. By looking at the question this way, as well as in the traditional issue-oriented research approach, we may gain new and unsuspected insights.

Finally, it should be mentioned that this report does not purport to offer the authors’

personal views of the controversial issue of woman’s role in society. It is, rather, a collage of the views advanced by the women and women’s groups who were the subjects of the nine case studies and of the interviews upon which the lifestyle vignettes were based.

chapter three: the main concerns



Six issues which emerged in the study have been designated as “main” ones, not because they are necessarily more important than others which emerged in the study, but because they were identified in all or most of the nine cities. These common issues were: housing, urban development, women in urban decision-making, education, employment and daycare.

Housing

Housing was identified as a major issue in all the reports, although it manifested itself in many different concerns.

The Vancouver report addressed itself to the single-parent housing problem and the development of alternative housing policies, including such things as cooperative arrangements and a greater variety of physical and design approaches to housing. This report suggested that women, like many minority groups, are discriminated against, and have difficulty finding and keeping housing.

The general theme of the Vancouver report is that the traditional nuclear family is only one of many possible housing situations and ways of life. The report suggests, however, that alternative forms of housing are not currently available for persons who choose or are forced to develop alternative approaches to living.

The reports from the other eight cities all focused their concerns on the low-income family's capacity to find and keep adequate housing. Although it was generally felt that women alone or women as heads-of-household were discriminated against, at the same time it was felt that discrimination was equally severe for all persons with low or fixed incomes. It was generally agreed that there is a stigma attached to public housing and subsidized housing units.

Some of the reports suggested that although discrimination against women and low-income families exists, the plight of minority groups is equally severe, or perhaps more so. The plight of native people in particular was cited in the Winnipeg report.

The Saint John findings indicated that housing per se is not as critical a concern as is the breakdown of the traditional family unit. The concern here was that many women who would prefer to stay at home with their children were going to work in order to provide sufficient income to support the family. The housing stock available for low-income families was generally seen as uncomfortable and too small for the families who must live there, and it was further suggested that this discomfort was forcing women to join the work force in order to escape the domestic environment.

In both St. John's and Halifax, housing concerns were related to the overall urban development and redevelopment picture. The Quebec City report suggested that all attempts to physically improve housing conditions will only be bandages on wounds until the social structure allows more freedom and mobility for women and minority groups.

The Montreal study addressed itself to the problems of urban renewal and particularly the displacement of people into environments foreign to them, or difficult for them to cope with. In this, as in all the reports, housing was viewed as considerably more than just a roof over one's head. The location of that "roof", the satisfaction that a home generates and the way one achieves personal freedom within the home environment were the real issue. Housing of some kind can be found by nearly everyone in Canada, but the quality of life associated with the home environment is the critical issue for women in all our cities.

Urban Development

The inability of citizens at large to influence decision-making processes which directly affect their lives was the principal concern here.

According to the Halifax report, deteriorating housing stock is a crucial problem; because of this deterioration, neighbourhoods are disintegrating with the introduction of highrise development and the spread of commercial districts and associated traffic congestion.

A major concern expressed in the Montreal report was the fact that the municipal

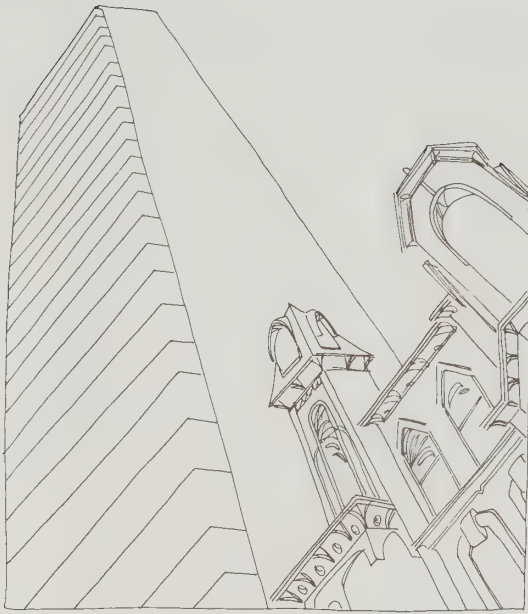
government is more concerned with major development programs than with the day-to-day problems of Montreal residents.

In St. John's it was also felt that City Hall needs to become more responsive to public opinion, and that citizen participation in decision-making should be mandatory for major development. It was further felt that decisions about development should be based on social needs and goals, rather than on strictly economic considerations; urban development and renewal should take note of the continuity of history and be continually aware of the St. John's Historic Trust Project, to keep the goals of development consistent with the preservation of historic sites.

The Winnipeg report reflected the feeling that sterile suburbs were being created there, in part by out-dated city requirements related to setbacks, roadways and the like; and that public involvement in the planning of the city's development and redevelopment was intentionally being limited.

The Quebec City report concerned itself with the priority being given to automobiles over people in urban renewal projects and with the lack of involvement of citizens, particularly women, in the planning process. Concern was also expressed that the preservation of the special character of each neighbourhood should be considered in the urban planning process.

The London study suggested that, although women's concerns and views do not differ greatly from those of the general public, there is particular concern among women with the rate of growth and development in the city of London. It was felt that provision



should be made for adequate transportation, and that the natural environment of the city should be preserved.

Of major concern in Calgary was the fact that private companies are taking no initiatives to provide alternatives to the single-family dwelling at a reasonable price. It was felt that, until such alternatives are found, there will continue to be a shortage of housing in general, and of multi-family dwellings in particular.

The Vancouver report suggested that increased involvement by women in the decision-making process for urban development would significantly change current approaches to the planning process.

In Saint John, it was suggested that subsidized housing should not be concentrated

in special areas, but should be scattered throughout the whole city to reduce the stigma currently attached to such housing. There was also concern that civic facilities be planned with a view to supporting the family unit and the development of neighbourhood life. Because of women's special interests in the family and in the quality of life, it was felt that more women should be appointed to the city planning commission.

In Halifax, most of the women interviewed expressed the view that Halifax residents enjoy a better quality of life than do the residents of most Canadian cities. It was felt that Halifax's unique historic character — the charm of the older houses, the lakes and parks, the strong sense of community in certain neighbourhoods, the pleasant pace of life, the diversity in cultural events and the closeness of the country to the city — should be maintained in any urban development or redevelopment activity.

The discussions of urban development and redevelopment programs in all nine cities were in general solution-oriented rather than problem-oriented. The solutions suggested were diverse, but the overriding theme was that the involvement of interested and concerned citizens could radically change the planning process. The implication in each report was that current methods of planning, although in some cases expedient, have tended to dehumanize urban environments and that citizens' involvement should be a required part of the urban development process if the quality of life for all urban residents is to be improved.

Women in Urban Decision-Making

Many of the reports expressed the view that women do not have an equal voice with men

in the urban decision-making process, and that the lack of involvement by women in the planning process in particular has worked to the detriment of urban environments and contributed to the artificial isolation of many women.

This was not the case, however, in all cities studied. In London, it was felt that women's views do not differ significantly from men's views of the directions that urban development should take, and that, in any case, women in that city have a fair and equitable voice in all decision-making.

In Vancouver, it was reported that the specific problems of women living alone or as heads of households had not been taken into consideration in planning and development issues. If inequities in planning are to be reduced for all areas of urban life, the report suggested, more women should be directly involved in both social and physical planning issues. It was felt that if women were given an increased voice in the decision-making process, the resulting decisions could radically alter the development of the community and, as a consequence, the supporting social services necessary for an improvement in the quality of life.

In Quebec City, it was felt that the problems of women are not unique in urban decision-making requirements, but often are the same as those of minority groups: inputs from all groups should be respected as separate but integral parts of the planning process.

The recommendations in the St. John's report suggested that an effort be made by government agencies to involve women in decisions

related particularly to consumer issues; to enable women to contribute significantly in this area the Department of Education should develop programs for consumer education at the high school level and, gradually, throughout all grade levels.

The Winnipeg study reported a severe lack of involvement by women in decisions related to housing, in both the public and private sectors. It was noted that citizen pressure groups were often organized by women, but that when a public stand was made on an issue, men took or were given the leadership roles. The implication was that a more equitable share of decision-making power should be granted to women within the province of Manitoba and that, until this was accomplished, a major portion of the public interest would not be represented in the decision-making process.

The Quebec City report suggested that it will require major changes in women's attitudes to affect urban politics and policies and until these attitudes change, women will have little influence in the decision-making process.

The Calgary report stressed the insufficient input by women in the decision-making process in both Calgary and in the province generally. The report recommended provincial action to improve and enforce equitable educational and employment opportunities for women. Until these inequities are resolved, it was felt, women's input into the decision-making process will be mere tokenism.

The Vancouver study divided the areas in which women could be involved in decisions on urban issues into four categories: social

research; planning; membership in decision-making bodies; and participation in citizen action groups, including women's organizations. This report emphasized the fact that the most significant areas in which women wish to participate, and in which they are most often denied participation, is in the joint management of family income and property. Without this basic economic recognition, the homemaker's lack of status will continue to be a psychological handicap and, for many, this nonparticipation perpetuates a whole system of exploitation.

The Saint John study reported that the women interviewed there feel that they lack leadership ability, and furthermore that this is a quality which few women possess. It was also felt that there are no avenues of communication now open between the women of Saint John and City Hall, or between women and the Department of Education.

According to the Halifax report, women in that city play an important leadership role in citizens' groups; in fact, they are usually the instigators of programs demanding citizen participation and involvement.

Whether reporting satisfaction or dissatisfaction with women's involvement in the urban decision-making process, most of the reports reflected the view that women's perspectives are different from those of the community at large. Most groups seemed to feel that for a variety of reasons the important contribution that women can make to the planning process in decision-making capacities is being under-utilized and under-sought. Until this situation is rectified, decision makers and the public at large will be denied the benefit of women's views,

and important public decisions will continue to be made without the vital contribution that women could make.

Education

All nine reports suggested that, generally speaking, there is a difference in the educational opportunities available to women and men. It was felt that many educational institutions discriminate against women, particularly women interested in part-time education, and that enrolment procedures have a built-in bias which makes it difficult for women to re-enter the educational scene.

Young women in Halifax, many of them students, were reported to be most concerned about the pressure within the educational system for women to learn only a certain set of skills. Young and middle-aged women expressed difficulty in finding needed educational opportunities, particularly adult education programs designed to help women return to the job market. The report recommended that Canada Manpower set up a counselling service to help such women evaluate their marketable skills.

The women interviewed in Saint John felt that overcrowded classrooms and a too-high pupil-teacher ratio were evident in that city's schools and that more guidance counsellors were needed. The report also expressed the view that teacher training in the Saint John area is inadequate and needs to be up-graded. Mention was made of deterioration in the level of discipline, particularly at the high school and junior high school levels, a situation that could only be rectified by the addition of counsellors and teachers trained to deal with disciplinary problems. In contrast, it was felt that enough programs are being offered, and of sufficient variety,

for women to acquire and upgrade skills, as well as for the enrichment of leisure activities. Transportation to these programs was seen as a continual problem, however.

There was further concern in Saint John that the Board of Education needs to establish better rapport with parents in each school district, and that it should be the school board's responsibility to foster community and neighbourhood spirit.

The Vancouver report stated that sex segregation in schools occurs primarily in the courses traditionally taught to all-male or all-female classes, such as industrial education and home economics, but that it is also evident in physical education and guidance counselling. In most schools, after-school activities and clubs are segregated according to sex. This segregation, it was felt, whether in class or club, denies the pupil full potential by channelling her or him into an out-dated and limited social role.

In addition to the problems experienced by high school students, the Vancouver study reported that mature women students in under-graduate courses in university are often placed in courses designed to give eighteen-year-olds a perspective on the world. Such courses waste the time of these women, it was felt, because their life experiences in child-rearing, work and marriage have already given them this perspective.

The Vancouver study further reported that school boards in the Vancouver area discriminate against married women in their hiring policies and in the fringe benefits which they offer to female employees. The group was further concerned that the textbook material being supplied to primary and secondary school students was often sexist in nature and approach.

The Winnipeg report echoed the concern in Vancouver that sex stereotyping in education

channels women into traditional roles. This was seen specifically in teaching material showing women and girls as passive, domestic, fearful, unadventurous, weak and boring, while males were shown as strong, aggressive, adventurous, brave, curious, resourceful and exciting.

The St. John's report suggested that there is a serious lack of educational programs for women in consumer awareness.

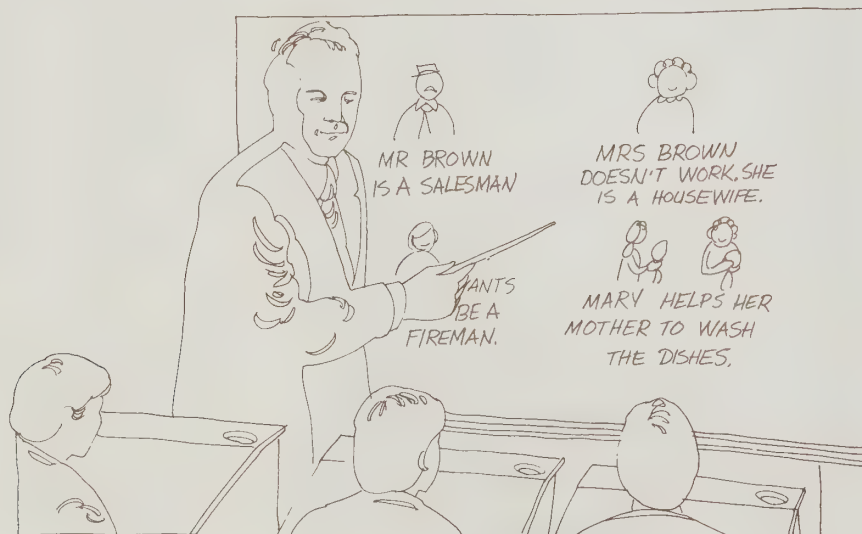
As an issue in the cities studied, then, problems in education revolve around two central themes:

- (1) the need to upgrade current educational programs for women and to expand programs in areas specifically geared to women's needs; and
- (2) the lack of educational opportunities for women in areas outside the traditionally accepted female role because of educational bias and role stereotyping in educational material.

Employment

Through most of the reports runs the theme that women who work must play many roles, and that the supporting services that make these roles possible (e.g. daycare centres) are often inadequate. Until these services are improved and expanded, achieving more full-time employment for women, and improved levels of employment, will be an uphill battle.

The Montreal report found that, except for women in relatively comfortable economic situations, having a family and a career simultaneously is almost impossible for most women because of a lack of supporting



services. Daycare facilities are inadequate, and there are no centralized services for family care if a woman pursues a career.

The St. John's findings suggested that working women in that community have difficulty obtaining equal pay, equal opportunity for advancement and training, equal fringe benefits, fair job classifications and necessary support facilities. The Winnipeg report echoed these findings, and recommended that a quota system be established requiring that a certain number of women be employed. It further suggested that more extensive Canada Manpower orientation programs be made available to help young women become aware of the career options open to them.

The Quebec City report suggested that there are still strong prejudices in Quebec against women working outside the home. There is discrimination in hiring, unequal pay for the same work as men, no maternity leave and no daycare centres. It was felt that there is still a strong conditioning for women to be mothers and, for that reason, most women still quit work as soon as they marry.

The Vancouver report stated even more strongly that society sees only men's work as valuable; if there is no man working on a job, it is considered unimportant. It also suggested that women in the Vancouver area should stand up for their rights and refuse to be stereotyped or treated with contempt by society.

The Saint John study suggested that unions could and should prepare women for union leadership and should direct more women to positions of authority. In addition, unions should be made aware that the family unit

is the basis for the quality of life and should work with management to develop policies and practices that support this unit.

Employment as an issue, then, addressed itself to the opening of options for women to work either at home or outside the home. Accompanying this was a demand for a change in public opinion to lessen the social stigma of a woman abdicating the wife-mother role to pursue other options.

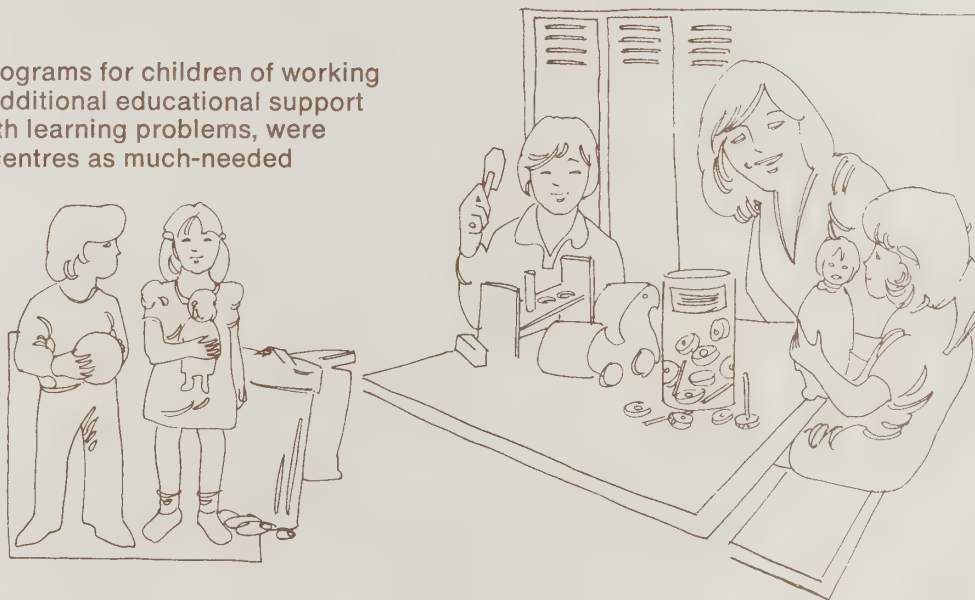
Daycare

The inadequacy of daycare facilities for children was cited as a major barrier, preventing women in urban centres across Canada from taking advantage of educational and employment opportunities and generally of opportunities for improving the quality of their lives. Daycare on a continuing basis was seen as a necessity for the working mother, and daycare on an intermittent basis for mothers wanting to take advantage of advanced educational or recreational opportunities.

After-school programs for children of working mothers, and additional educational support for children with learning problems, were seen in many centres as much-needed

services which are now inadequate. In most of the nine cities daycare facilities for the affluent were seen as being adequate and generally well-maintained. For the low- and middle-income or fixed-income family, however, daycare is often inaccessible or inadequate. It was generally felt that the workers in daycare centres need to be better trained for their jobs because of the responsibility they take in assuming a role which has traditionally been home-based.

In all the cities, it was generally agreed that in order to solve the daycare problem it will be necessary for various levels of government to significantly subsidize improved daycare services, and that this government subsidy should be matched by contributions from employers. Daycare was seen not only as a means for women to take advantage of adult education and employment opportunities, but as a vehicle for freeing women to pursue all avenues to personal fulfilment.



chapter four: other concerns

As was noted in Chapter Two, the issues discussed here are not necessarily less important than the ones just discussed. They have been treated separately simply because, unlike the others, these were not identified in a majority of the nine cities. Although in most cases these issues emerged in only two or three of the cities studied, by their nature, they could have arisen in any of the nine cities.

Transportation

The Montreal report recommended that downtown traffic be restricted to public transport and pedestrians, and that public transportation should be free for elderly people.

In St. John's, concern was expressed about the major changes in traffic patterns which urban development is imposing on the landscape. It was felt that citizens must participate in the choice of location of new

roadways if transportation systems are to be environmentally conscious and stay within a manageable scale.

The Winnipeg study addressed its concern about transportation to the problems of suburban residents who have unpredictable or insufficient public transportation between their neighbourhoods and the downtown area. It was also felt that some form of rapid transit, with feeder lines to other forms of transportation, should be investigated so that the use of automobiles could be restricted in the downtown core area.

The Quebec City report was concerned with the maintenance of pedestrian-scale development, suggesting that caution should be taken in approving developments which are automobile-oriented rather than pedestrian-oriented. In similar vein, the Calgary report suggested that an extension of the current dial-a-bus system be instigated and that more bus shelters be built in suburban areas.



The Vancouver report emphasized that, without a car, it is impossible to become fully involved in the wide range of activities available. In particular, it noted that central city residents have difficulty escaping the urban environment into the surrounding countryside. This report further stated that single women, young mothers with children, and the elderly use public transit more than other persons in that city, and the lack of adequate service, especially at night, is a problem for all of these groups.

The Vancouver Rape Crisis Centre makes a direct link between the inadequacies of transportation systems and the incidence of rape, since this often occurs in dark residential areas where bus service is infrequent. This report also suggested that housewives were especially apprehensive about the effects of heavy traffic in their neighbourhoods on their children's safety. It was felt that Vancouver needs to place greater emphasis on public transportation in order to solve transportation problems. If this public transportation system is to be effective, women, who constitute the majority of present users, should be consulted.

In general, then, increased public transportation and decreased use of the private automobile are anticipated as future fact, or seen as a desired improvement. In either case, an efficient system of public transportation was seen as an important element in the improvement of the quality of urban life.

Leisure and Recreation

Free time for the working women to enjoy leisure activity of any kind seems to be practically nonexistent today. The multiple and complex role described as the norm

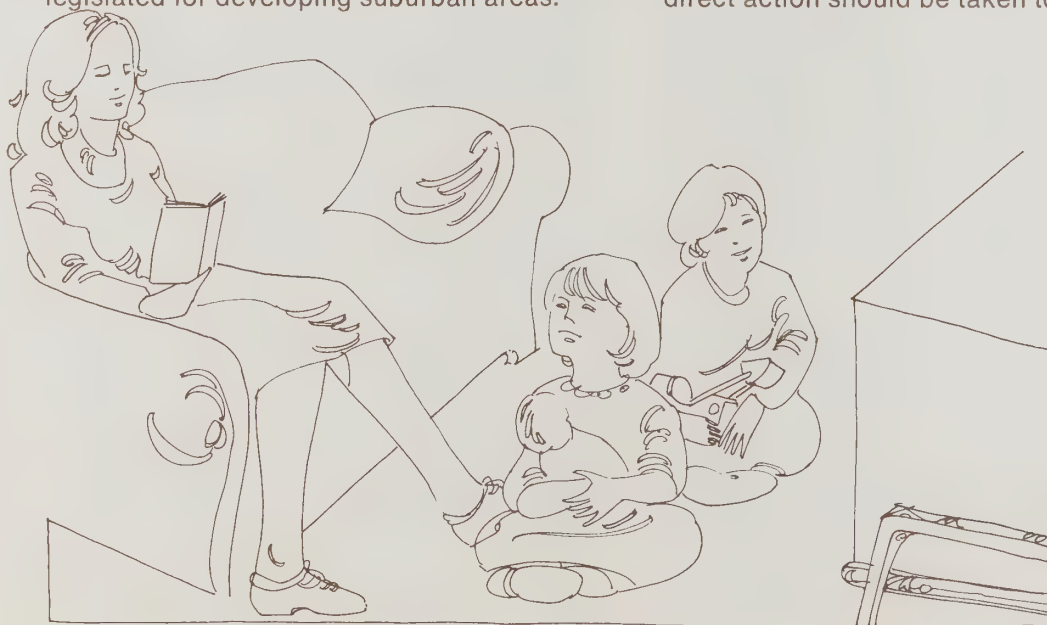
for most working women with children seems to eliminate much of the time which might be given to leisure pursuits. However, many of the reports suggested that educational opportunities should be made available for working women to improve skills related to crafts, art, music and the like, which could augment their home time.

The Montreal report noted specifically the lack of libraries, recreation centres, community centres and meeting places for women, and the pronounced lack of green space and "passive" recreation areas throughout the city.

Winnipeg women also expressed a concern for the preservation of green belts and green areas in the city, particularly in the downtown core, and asked for the development of standards to ensure that green spaces will be legislated for developing suburban areas.

This group felt that there are not enough parks to accommodate high-density and highrise dwellers in Winnipeg and that ways should be explored to open options for cultural activities, such as the symphony and ballet, to lower income groups. The suggestion was made that women with children at home need more recreational and educational outlets than are now available. It was generally felt by the women interviewed that recreation in the Winnipeg area is too sports-oriented, with too few recreational facilities for adults or teenagers. Consequently, there are few places for families to go together, with cultural recreation too expensive and therefore available to only a very few.

The London consultants reported that a continuing awareness of the natural environment of the city should be fostered and that direct action should be taken to preserve it.



Calgary women, too, were concerned with the preservation of the natural environment, specifically riverbank lands. Here, too, admission to many municipal facilities, such as swimming pools and arenas, is too expensive to allow low-income families to use them. The report stated that the Parks and Recreation Department's planning process would be improved if more women held management positions in the department. In addition, it was suggested that school yards and school buildings be used for recreation programs, at minimal cost.

The Saint John study suggested that recreational facilities and programs in that city are reasonably good. It was felt, however, that more craft classes and information classes should be made available to women. It was also felt that, for low-income groups, the most widely used recreation space was the home, with television the primary form of recreation. To improve the quality of city recreation, it was suggested that a careful examination of recreation programs for families be made. Improvements should be made in transportation facilities and in access to larger parks and beaches, and more information should be disseminated to the public about park programs and activities.

Women interviewed in all nine cities felt that in general the recreation and leisure opportunities offered in those cities were sufficiently diverse to satisfy the needs of residents. However, it was often felt that lack of information about, and transportation to, programs and the poor timing of events and activities made optimum participation impossible.

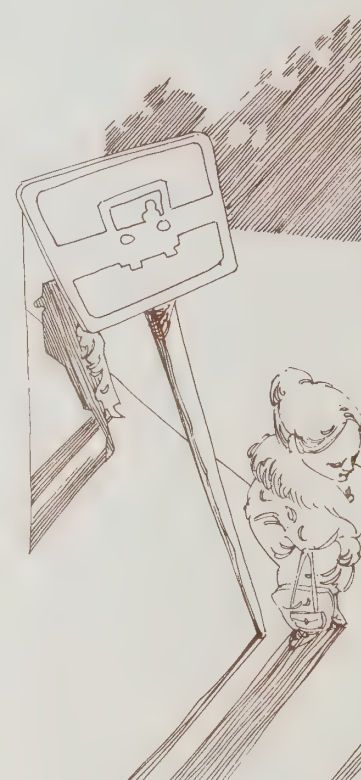
Violence, Vandalism and Crime

Violence and crime were a particular concern in the Vancouver report. The study suggests that this is so because women have been taught to be afraid to be out alone at night. To rectify this situation, it was felt, women will have to stop being defined by society in terms of passivity while men are defined in terms of aggressiveness. A criticism frequently levelled at rape victims, according to the Vancouver report, is that women should not go out at night unescorted. This attitude imposes a very restricted role upon women, one that is in direct opposition to women's growing sense of independence.

To counteract the violence against women, the Vancouver report suggested that bus stops be well-lit and equipped with some form of emergency call device, and that women police officers be trained and placed on public duty as soon as possible. It further suggested that there be stronger controls against violent behaviour in television programs and that there be more women involved in television programming.

Several other reports suggested that improved public participation in the decision-making process and the development of community activities would bring about a sense of ownership of neighbourhood facilities, and that this might in turn lead to a decrease in vandalism. As suggested in Chapter Three, some of the cities reported the feeling that the educational system needs to impose stronger discipline, particularly at the junior and senior high school levels, and to try to instill a sense of the value of property.

Violence, vandalism and crime were seen in all cities as concerns which could be explained, in part, by physical or technical inadequacies: the design of transportation facilities, for example, or inadequate police patrolling. The overriding feeling, however, was that the "rehumanizing" of urban centres, the development of a sense of neighbourhood and belonging, and greater participation by citizens in decision-making processes, could be major factors in reducing crime in the city.



chapter five: portraits of thirteen urban women

woman, as we noted in Chapter Two, but all are founded upon the characteristics of many actual women. In this sense, all can be found in our cities by those who choose to look for them.

Marcie

Marcie lives in a small urban centre and sees herself as a resident of the community as a whole rather than of her neighbourhood. She is a grade ten student, active in gymnastics, dance, theatre and sports, who finds herself constantly involved with activities related to school events.

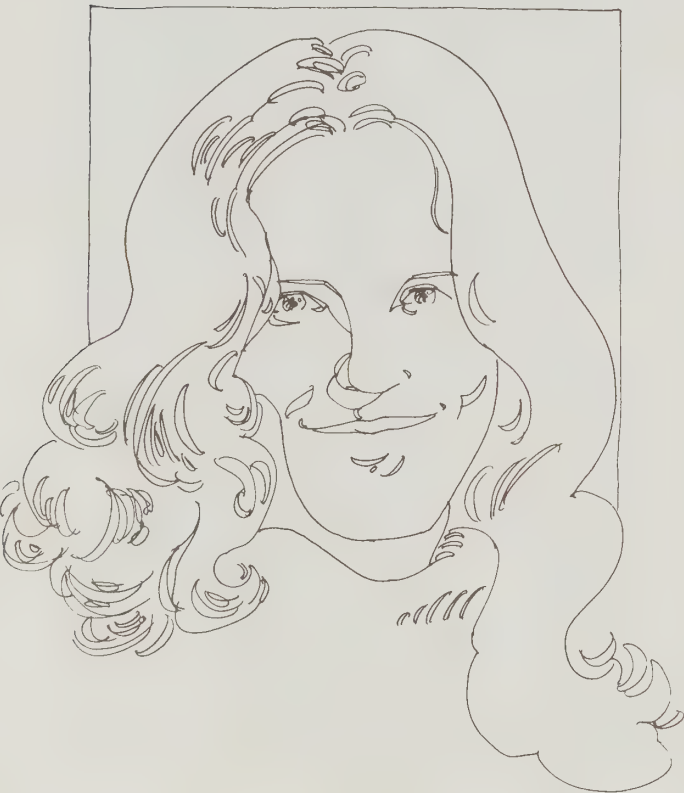
Marcie was the first girl admitted to her school gymnastic squad and feels great pride in this accomplishment. She sees herself marrying about the age of eighteen, although she admits that there is no one in her life now who seems to be the right person for her. She also expects that she will have five or six children. She assumes that she will move from the city to a more rural district, and that she will spend her life raising her children and living much as her mother and her grandmother before her did.

Although Marcie is an honour student in all her classes and is fully bilingual, if anyone asks her about the possibility of continuing her education, she laughs and says, "Why?" She is convinced that a woman's place is in the home, and that she will find plenty of volunteer activities to express her personal interests and help her husband as well. She says that her guidance counsellors keep suggesting that she apply for university and to think about what course she would like to take. She says that she feels pressured to become the kind of woman she sees on television, and sometimes describes that woman as "mod".

One thing is obvious from the nine case study reports: the way the quality of life is perceived is determined by moral, intellectual and physical mores, as well as by social and economic environment.

In examining women's perceptions of the quality of life in urban Canada in 1975, we must be careful not to be too much influenced by any vocal minority. No minority can speak for all women in all regions and social positions within Canada. We must look at the quality of life not only as a collective notion, concerned with society as a whole and with particular groups within society, but also as an individual concept, in the sense that each woman reflects a unique combination of factors in her perceptions. For these reasons it was thought appropriate to incorporate in this report a series of portraits of women living in cities in Canada. None of these portraits represents a real

Although Marcie has many options open to her, she is rather set in her ideas of what she wants to do. The high school counsellor's dismissal of her interest in being a housewife and participant in the community is perhaps not as helpful as it could be for Marcie's future. Perhaps Marcie should be introduced in a more formal way to other ways of life besides her own. It is evident from conversations with Marcie that she has not been exposed to many lifestyles and, for that reason, she continues to see alternatives as fantasies rather than realities which she might pursue.



Cathy

Cathy is nearly sixteen. She has a twelve-year-old brother, and for the past three years has had the major responsibility for running the household. Her father left his profession to try a new venture shortly after divorcing his wife. The children were originally placed in the custody of their mother, but because of changed circumstances have lived with their father for the past three years.

Cathy has been forced to grow up very quickly. In appearance she is a typical mid-teenager with a quick, happy smile and bright eyes. After lengthy discussions, however, she is revealed as somewhat disturbed by the burden of her role as daughter, mother and sometimes social "wife" when the occasion demands. Her parents' interests were in the arts and philosophy, and as a small child she had intended to follow in their footsteps and choose art or writing as a profession. She recently suggested that this "looked like a lousy way to make a living" and has decided, instead, in her first year of high school, to choose activities which will lead her into law.

It is difficult to assess where Cathy's priorities will lie in the future. She has seen many lifestyle models and has experienced a great deal of freedom for a girl her age. She has been surrounded by well-educated people and engaged in conversations which would be difficult for many adults. She has learned to participate in several ways, one by listening, another by learning and reacting whenever possible.

When asked what she thinks her future holds, she becomes confused. She says she thinks she could probably get married and have children some day, but that she is not sure

that marriage is a good idea or that this is the kind of world that children should be brought into.

This description might leave the impression that Cathy is an unhappy girl with a depressed outlook for the future. On the contrary; she is enthusiastic, eager to learn, and willing to participate in any activity which may provide a new opportunity for her. Having at the age of sixteen already played so many roles, she has chosen no particular one for herself. Perhaps she is the beginning of the new breed of women who have been described as liberated. On the other hand, she is like so many women who have searched for position and identity without tradition to guide them.

Cathy sees herself as very different from those around her and often feels isolated from the rest of her peer group. She is anxious to find friends and to find some way of feeling more involved with things which are important to her classmates. However, she admits that in trying to find friends her own age she often becomes frustrated with the immaturity and lack of experience they exhibit.

Her instructors say that Cathy is a serious student and a willing participant, although it would seem that learning is not easy for her. She has learned to find assistance and guidance from adults outside her family and seems to do well in the areas that interest her.

Although she was taught as a young child that suburban living was healthy for children and that inner-city living was detrimental, she is now living in the downtown area of a large city and finding it very rewarding.

She cannot understand why her suburban friends are opposed to downtown living and now finds their lives most peculiar. She is independent in finding activities of her own and is without fear in using public transportation to reach any point in the city, or to participate in any activity available to her.

The major difficulty for Cathy is that she has seen so many alternatives and yet has so few consistent models that it will be very difficult for her to choose a lifestyle, and then to understand how to live within it.

With luck, she will get guidance from within the school system or from women's groups. At this point, mass media and the female adults she meets are Cathy's primary models.

Joan

Joan is eighteen. Her I.Q. tests show that she is in a low to average range, and school has always been difficult for her. She has been a diligent student and has done fairly well in school, but she has had to follow in the footsteps of an older sister and brother, one who did very well in school and one who was troublesome. She has found herself in the unfortunate position of being neither able to excel academically like her older sister, nor interested in exploiting the difficulties which have been associated with her brother.

She hopes to find a career in nursing or as a dance instructor. Joan's strongest motivation in choosing a career is to be able to support herself. She has no great dreams of being a professional woman, but is concerned that she needs the protection of a livelihood which would allow her to support herself should the husband she hopes to find

die or her marriage not work. She has recently completed most of her high school courses and is taking some university courses. In most respects she is satisfied with herself and feels that she will find a comfortable niche in life.

Perhaps of all the women mentioned in this report Joan is the most liberated. She is happy with who she is and the goals that she is pursuing. She would like to maintain her own identity and her ability to be independent, but recognizes that she would prefer a partnership or partial dependency in the traditional setting of marriage.

Joan is not in a hurry to meet the goals and aspirations that she has set for herself. Through past experience she expects that it will take time to make the right decisions and to follow through with appropriate actions which will provide long-term satisfaction. She understands that she has many options, even within her limitations, but she does not believe that she can or should separate herself from the human race. She believes that she is part of the mainstream of the community; that she will remain there; and that it is her responsibility to be as productive and useful as she can within the environment in which she finds herself.

At eighteen, Joan is warm and lively, a gentle woman with the capacity for sharing the joy of her new experiences without embarrassment.

Melissa

Melissa, known as Lisa to her friends, is thirty-six years old and a divorcee with three children, ranging in age from nine to fifteen years. Lisa has been divorced for nearly five years and, during that time, has received no

money from her former husband to help support her or the children.

She lives in a public-housing townhouse which has three bedrooms, a bathroom, living-dining area, kitchen and an unfinished basement. Outside, the surroundings are mostly concrete, with fences and no private open space. The closest park to Lisa's housing development is nearly four miles away. She and her children go there only during the winter, when a hockey rink is set up for children.

She has applied to Canada Manpower for various jobs during the last four years, but has not been able to find a job which would allow her to be home when the children get home from school. The family's existence is totally supported by the welfare and family allowance cheques Lisa receives.

In talking with Lisa it becomes obvious immediately that she feels she has been "used" by her exhusband and by society. She is cheerful with her children and becomes involved in school activities when asked. However, she has given up on the community groups within her area as "lost causes".

There is a daycare centre in the housing project, run by the province. The per-child payment is geared to income. However, Lisa does not believe that children should be raised or attended to by adults other than their parents, and therefore will not use the daycare and after-school programs for her children.

In general, she believes that the majority of divorced women in Canada live in circumstances similar to hers. She is convinced

that her situation will not change until her children are grown up. Perhaps then she will be able to take a job and improve her economic situation.

Lisa believes that no one outside her housing project is aware of the plight of its residents; she becomes agitated when hearing on the news of purported misuse of funds by welfare recipients. She feels that these reports arise because people “outside” do not believe in the reality of her existence.

The housing unit in which Lisa lives is, perhaps, the most studied subsidized housing area in Canada. Many reports are available to interested citizens who would like to help families in situations like Lisa’s, and many people have tried to help. The greatest difficulty for women like Lisa is that, because life has been so difficult, and there have been so many disappointments, they tend to trust no one, and become more and more insular. Lisa wants a better life for her children than she sees as being possible for herself. But when asked what “better” means, she is unable to answer. She tends to use as examples television programs and the characters from them that seem “right” to her.

Lisa has no friends outside the housing complex. The residents of the complex tend to be of similar age and circumstances. With rare exceptions, the residents feel that they are not just in transition, but in a permanent, hopeless situation.

Lisa explains that when she accepted the townhouse as her accommodation, she felt it would be only temporary and so did not unpack her belongings. She lived from cardboard boxes for close to two years. She has

since come to the conclusion that this is probably the only home she will know and has tried to “personalize” it as best she can. But there are still cardboard boxes in the living room, some being used as coffee tables, others simply stored in corners waiting for whatever might come next.

The suburban community which surrounds the project has on many occasions petitioned the metropolitan government to stop any further encroachment of public housing into their residential area. They claim that there is no control of the children from the project and that the kind of people who live there are not welcome in their schools or in their neighbourhood. These attitudes seem to have been communicated to Lisa’s children. They feel they must make their friends within the housing development and that it is dangerous to try to make friends outside.



Shirley

Shirley, known to her friends as Shell, is a forty-five-year-old housewife in an affluent family. She has three children; her husband is a professional man. Both have had a number of lovers during their nearly twenty years of marriage. They have evolved an interesting and satisfactory relationship, both with each other and with their children.

Her husband pursues his business role diligently, sometimes even aggressively. She pursues with zeal the upper middle-class role of housewife and mother, but is currently discovering that she enjoys escaping this environment from time to time and has enrolled in several adult education courses.

If one were to examine this marriage closely it might be seen as a less than happy one; however, the camaraderie that Shell and her husband share, which has evolved by decision and nondecision over the years, makes their marriage a good one. One difficulty that Shell expresses is that the mixed role in which she finds herself is confusing and sometimes disconcerting. Generally, when she speaks of these problems she organizes them into a list of “guilts”. They range from “my house isn’t clean enough” to “I am too tired to do the things that would make me happier and more fulfilled.”

Her husband comes from a background which more or less demanded that he become a professional. She has, by her own admission, sublimated many of her own requirements for mental expansion and growth to help him pursue his goals. Both feel that they are at a point of re-assessment in their marriage, and that, if that re-assessment is not successful, they will

perhaps go separate ways. On the other hand, in discussing with both of them the nature of their marriage, it becomes evident that both are satisfied with the relationship and with their friends. It is therefore unlikely that the partnership will dissolve.

Because of their economic position, and their awareness of its availability, Shell and her husband have spent a fair amount of time in professional counselling to help sort out difficulties related primarily to the breaking of the traditions and roles which they were born into. They describe themselves as “born in the middle”, at a time when the tradition that households included grandparents, parents and children was just beginning to break down, but had not entirely done so.

Both are actively seeking ways to let their children meet other adults so that they will see alternate lifestyle patterns to the nuclear family. It is, of course, impossible to predict what effects their own “arrangement” will have on their children. Positively or negatively, their children will understand that people live and cope with problems in different ways. Perhaps this will make their decisions easier for them, but both parents are concerned that, in fact, their own freer lifestyle may make things more difficult for their children.

Shell and her husband see themselves as typical of their age group and economic level. Moreover, they know that they are seen as typical by people whom they meet. While understanding that there are many lifestyles besides their own, they have not found one that seems to offer the personal satisfaction both would like to receive from a continuing relationship. By their own admis-

sion, they have many acquaintances and a few friends, and they describe their own relationship as requiring, by its very nature, a great deal of discretion.

Both would like to experience communal living, where they could share with other adults the responsibility of raising children, and share their own experiences with the children of their friends. However, both admit that they would be uncomfortable with any lifestyle that would remove the comforts they have become accustomed to. They describe themselves as intellectually liberal and emotionally conservative.

Their children adore them. Even though they recognize that their parents often have difficulties resolving differences of opinion, they find them exciting, interested and enthusiastic supporters of their activities. The children’s major concern is that their parents will one day find their problems insoluble and that they will then have to deal with two separate households.

Ethel

Ethel is a sixty-five-year-old woman, recently widowed, who has just moved into an old folks’ home. Her decision to move there was made partly because she did not want to disrupt her children’s lives, and partly because her children had made it clear that they felt she would be better off with people her own age. Furthermore, they did not feel that they could afford to support another person.

She lives in a new housing complex for senior citizens. It is well organized and many activities are available to the residents. Ethel has been living in the complex for about six months but has not yet participated in any

of the available programs, activities or outings. The reason she gives is that she feels too old to take the strain of the suggested activities. Ethel is waiting to die!

By her own admission, her life had revolved around her husband and her children and grandchildren. She now feels isolated and lonely. She is afraid of exposing herself to new experiences, for fear that she may show her ignorance, and the fact that she stayed away from social contact for most of her married life.

The administrator of the residence does not feel much hope that Ethel will be able to come out of her shell and enjoy what may be twenty or more years of her life. He feels that the only hope Ethel has to expand her activity is through involvement with her children and grandchildren.

The administrator admits with embarrassment that the home is not equipped to handle cases like Ethel’s on an individual basis. They simply do not have sufficient staff with the skills to help her.

Ethel was always a good housekeeper, a good wife and mother and a good grandmother. It seems that if she had seen or been shown alternatives for involvement in community activities outside her own rather limited environment at an earlier age, she might be better able to cope with her present circumstances.



Virginia

Virginia is eighty-five years old. She is enthusiastically active in her community and does not see herself as an old lady. She came to Canada with her parents when she was four months old. Her parents had come to Canada to work in one of the mining communities.

Her sister ran away from home shortly after the family's arrival in Canada and, at the age of twelve, Virginia left as well. Upon meeting her sister in the mid-sized mining community where she lived, she discovered that her sister made her living through the operation of a brothel. Finding no other employment, Virginia joined her sister in this activity. She pursued this career until the age of fifteen when she met her husband, who worked on one of the surveying crews

in the mining area. She had nine children in rapid succession and was very quickly able to change her role within the community from what she describes as outcast to right-living citizen. In fact, she became the matriarch of the community.

After nearly fifty years of marriage, she and her husband decided they had outgrown the small city where they were living and moved to a larger metropolitan area where there would be more things for them to do.

Both are actively involved in designing and organizing programs for the elderly, as well as volunteering their services to daycare centres and schools, telling stories of the early history of the mining industry in Canada. They claim that they have never spent money unnecessarily and never intend to, knowing that they may need it in their old age.

From the age of fifteen Virginia and her husband, who was then twenty, have shared their experiences. The birth and growth of their children and grandchildren was rich and rewarding for them both. They have always allowed each other the freedom to pursue independently activities of interest to each.

Virginia's husband has recurring bouts of arthritis and is, therefore, physically somewhat more limited than his wife. However, both agree that the ailments which come with age will not stop them from being with people of all ages and being as actively involved in the community as possible. They do not see themselves as old; they do not speak as if they are old. In their presence, one has a sense of the continuity of history and that somehow this should be preserved.

Vivian

Vivian is sixty-three years old and a widow. By her own rather embarrassed admission, she has never been happier in her life. She has always been interested in such activities as sewing circles, church activities, quilting bees and crafts. While her husband was alive she felt constant pressure not to neglect her duties as a wife, and she is now freed of that pressure. She is now enjoying activities which she has for a long time wanted to take part in.

Vivian explains that she was married at a very early age, had thirteen children, and was always a second-class citizen in the household. Freed of her children, she is now able to play grandmother as she chooses. On the death of her husband, Vivian completely redecorated the house to suit her own tastes. She is looking for opportunities to work with young people so that they might have the benefit of understanding the transition she went through.

Vivian is not interested in living in a residence for older people as long as she is able to care for herself. She feels that she would lose the freedom that she has so recently gained.

This woman is considered slightly "wacky" by her children, but, on the other hand, she sees their lives as being rather peculiar. She has met this conflict in lifestyles by recognizing that the world is changing and that it is to the future that she should be looking, and not the past, in her final efforts at making the world a better place in which to live.

Consuelo

Consuelo is forty years old and a recent immigrant to Canada from the Philippines. She immigrated with her mother and two sisters. She was to meet and marry a man with whom she had been corresponding for a number of years. She has spent three years in Canada and has found the climate the most difficult adjustment she has had to make.

In the Philippines she had a career as a nurse and, after completing examinations to qualify here, has continued nursing.

After one year of marriage she was divorced, but she still maintains a close friendship with her former husband. She has recently met someone new and is seriously considering a second marriage. Consuelo lives with another nurse in an apartment complex where her mother and two sisters also live.

In talking about her decision to come to Canada, Consuelo admits that the romance of her correspondence far outweighed the possible problems of immigration. However, she is very comfortable in her new environment and is looking forward to becoming a Canadian citizen. She speaks three languages — English, Spanish and Filipino — and is studying French in her free time.

Consuelo was luckier, in her opinion, than are most new Canadian immigrants, because she came to this country with some financial backing and with the support of her husband during the initial stages. She commented on the difficulties of immigrants who come to Canada with only the expectations produced by mass media, particularly by North American movies. She spoke of people who cannot deal with the language, or with

Canada's requirement for accreditation of skills acquired in their own countries, as having many problems. She feels that she has been well accepted in her community, and through her work she has a broad understanding of the variety of lifestyles lived by Canadians.

She describes a young Chinese registered nursing assistant whom she met recently as an example of tenacity. This woman was a physician in China before immigrating to Canada. She was accepted into this country because of her profession. However, soon after arrival she discovered that it would be no less than five years before she could practise medicine. Consuelo sees this woman as courageous, in continuing to work in the medical profession at one of the lower para-medical levels. She admires this woman for teaching herself to speak English, and for trying to gain an understanding of medical terminology by working within a hospital environment even though she cannot work at the professional level for which she was trained.

Consuelo feels that, generally, Canada is one of the easier countries in which to be assimilated as an immigrant and feels that her opportunities are much greater than those she had in her own country. She does not feel discriminated against or in any way put down by her status as an immigrant. She expresses concern about legislation which would reduce the status of immigrants arriving in Canada, and the welcome she feels they now receive.

Consuelo says that the contrast in tradition and roles between her past social environment and her current one is one of her major difficulties in trying to assimilate into her

new environment. She wonders if the women's movement is forgetting that if women's roles are to change, men's roles must change as well, and that this must be a joint effort.

She sees herself as Canadian, middle class, and with great opportunity for upward mobility. She says that she has not had time to take part in activities of the women's movement because of other commitments, but she feels that any woman who can should take time to try to understand the role of women in Canada today; an explanation should be given to immigrants about the alternative roles available to them, since these may be very different from the traditions they have brought with them. Consuelo says this should be done carefully, however, because the richest and most rewarding part of living in a Canadian city is the mixture of traditions and lifestyles which can be found there.

Margaret

Margaret lives in a mid-sized community in central Canada. She is twenty years old, with two young children; her husband is employed by the same manufacturing firm where his father still works. She and her family live in a rented three-bedroom townhouse with dishwasher, washing machine, and a dryer. The house has a living-dining area and a bathroom, and playground space provided by the management.

Margaret's role is the one she expected to play. She married her high-school sweetheart and had the two children she planned to have. She is kept busy with activities within the closely-knit community environment. She has a small garden, reads magazines about home decorating and knows that some

day she and her husband will have a home of their own. She was raised to believe that her role as a wife was to be helpmate to her husband, keeper of the home front and guardian of the children.

One might expect that Margaret would see her horizons as limited. However, upon talking with her, one discovers that she has a well mapped-out course for her life, and believes that things will go according to plan. There are no alternative directions she would choose to take. She has neighbours who are taking courses in community colleges, and she recognizes that there are ways of life besides her own. However, she lives her life day-to-day and has very little idea of where else she might be. Neither happy nor unhappy, she is moderately content with her life. Her image of the world outside comes from visions of the women she sees on television. Her sense of cleanliness, efficiency and mobility arise from the advertising she sees.

Margaret does not expect her husband to help her in the duties which have been allocated to her by tradition. She understands, from having watched her parents and her husband's parents, that a man works during the day to provide financial support for a family and that it is a woman's job to be at home to support, comfort and protect the children and to look after the household.

She often takes an interest in community activities which are held near her home. She never organizes such activities herself, however.

Although Margaret has access to both public and private transportation, her per-

ception of the world around her and the urban life available to her is directly related to her everyday existence and does not extend any further.

Margaret believes in fantasy, and in imaginary situations where people live in a more affluent way than she does. However, she believes that these are not real people like herself, her family, friends and neighbours, but are "made-up" people. She rarely watches the news or follows world events except as they relate to famous people, and even these people never seem quite real to her. She is unlikely to be personally affected by national economic crises and may be only slightly aware of changes in family budget patterns and overall lifestyle. Her world is one of rule and order, right and wrong, as she understands what these things are for her. She does not expect that they will change during her life.

Margaret does not see herself as either rich or poor. These definitions have no meaning for her because by design, tradition and pattern, her life is so insular. She is usually willing to help a neighbour in difficulty in any way that she can and, in fact, feels lucky that she is not herself among the needy. If, within a certain period of time, she does not see her family moving up financially, she may try to help her husband in his role by getting a job, but only after the children are in school. "They" are most often blamed for any discomforts or inconveniences that affect her family; "they" include all governments, big business and in some cases God's will.

In talking with Margaret one discovers that her aspirations for the future relate primarily to making progress easier for her children

as they grow up. These aspirations relate to the children's experiences in school as well as to recreation and leisure. She is not always sure why these things are important, but feels that they must be because of the importance given to them in the mass media.

Rosalyn

Rosalyn is twenty-five, married, with one child, an infant. Before her marriage she had a very satisfying career, and for a while after her marriage she continued to work while her husband went to school. When she was seven months pregnant she quit her job to stay at home and look after the house, which she had always wanted to do. She is beginning now to take part in adult education classes and other activities which allow her to feel that she is continuing to grow. Before that she had gone through a difficult period, watching her husband go through school and into a profession from which she felt isolated.

Her own job had brought her into contact with many different kinds of people, since she worked in a great variety of neighbourhoods. She became very much interested in understanding and describing the neighbourhoods in which she was working, finding it exciting and thought-provoking. She explains that she grew up in a relatively well-educated family and that she was used to talking and thinking about the environment she lived in.

By outward appearances, Rosalyn has arrived at the goals she was seeking. She has established an environment which is acceptable to her family, consistent with the model she was given as a child of what home, family and the role of a woman should be. However, she finds herself begin-

ning to feel frustrated about what she sees as a double standard. Her complaints are related not to any lack of interest by her husband in household activities, but rather to her own lack of enthusiasm about some of these activities. She hopes, however, that by getting involved with activities outside her home and by exploring alternative ways of fulfilling the role she has established for herself, she will become more comfortable with herself and better able to deal with her husband's continuing intellectual growth.

Rosalyn sees herself as living a life that is normal and proper, if sometimes dull. Her friends see her as a good wife and mother, and as a woman in search of her own identity. She feels lucky to live in a city which offers opportunities for her to seek out activities and interests independently, without disrupting the traditional role she feels she must maintain.

Eleanor

Eleanor is a twenty-three-year-old confirmed "liberated woman". She feels that she can find greater satisfaction in working at a career than in devoting all of her time to a family and a home. She has a successful independent business of her own, and leads a life which she finds satisfying. She feels sorry for women who have locked themselves into family life, feeling that they are cheating themselves and that they have no idea what potential they might discover if they were freed from the burden they have assumed. She has an active and traditionally romantic social life, but by her own admission, has very few personal friends. Much of her social life revolves around her work and much of the time she spends at social gatherings is spent making new business contacts.

Eleanor sees herself as an urban creature. She lives in a three-bedroom flat in a house which has been converted to storefront and apartments. She has a roommate who travels a great deal, and so they rarely see each other. Her reason for sharing her accommodation is more an economic consideration than a search for companionship.

This young woman comes from a small town outside a city. She sees the city as a vital, growing place, and small towns as stagnant. Eleanor has chosen the role of "eccentric", she says, primarily to attract attention and thereby to open new business opportunities in her public relations work. It is important to her to be on top of what is happening in the city and she is a better source of information than most local periodicals for finding out where the "action" is.

Because in her business it is necessary for her to understand them, she is very much aware of various neighbourhood and community profiles within her city. However, she tends to understand them in a statistical sense and has little direct contact with people living outside her milieu.

She is interested in the women's movement as it relates to her acceptance as a person within the environment she lives in, but has little interest in becoming actively involved in any programs directly related to women's opportunities. It could be said that she is philosophically and theoretically "liberated", but her deeper concern is with acceptance of her own lifestyle.

Eleanor has little understanding of the satisfaction a woman might find in a career as a housewife and she has little, if any, interest in understanding that woman's alternatives.

She seems to give a great deal of thought and energy to justifying her own lifestyle and position.

She explains that she is seen in her home town as unfortunate and misguided, and that her achievements are scorned there rather than applauded. She further explains that as long as she avoids her home town and stays in the city environment she is comfortable and satisfied with her life. It is only when she is forced to answer questions about her life at home that she is misunderstood and ridiculed. She looks forward to a time when her family and home town will accept her as she is and stop trying to turn her into something which better suits their idea of a "young lady".

Mary Ann

Mary Ann is the wife of a police officer in a Canadian metropolitan area. She is twenty-three years old and has three small children. Her friends are, for the most part, the wives of other police officers. These women have formed a community in which they plan activities arranged around their husbands' rotating schedules. Her main concern is her husband's safety. She has no understanding of politics and no real interest in the subject, but she has a feeling that politics is the major cause of danger in her husband's work.

Recently, the husband of one of her friends was injured on duty and each of the families in the community helped with food and child care until the police officer was ready to return to work. Mary Ann and her friends feel that their husbands are misunderstood and that there should be more publicity about police activities and the positive side of their husbands' work.



At a more personal level, Mary Ann and her friends are opposed to abortion, and it is only recently that the subject of birth control has come up for discussion.

The women in Mary Ann's community have a vague fear of travelling outside of their neighbourhood except in groups, or with the protection of their husbands. Perhaps this attitude is due partly to the stories of the outside world which their husbands bring home. Recently a movement has begun to provide more women's activities within the neighbourhood, such as physical fitness and crafts classes, and shared daycare. At the moment, none of these programs is being fully utilized and

because of financial difficulties they may be closed down.

Mary Ann feels that things are moving too fast; changes are coming too quickly. She would like advice about what she should be doing to train her daughter for another time and place. She does not know where to go for professional help, however, and probably would not actively seek it even if she knew where to find it.

In her circle it is to family and to the families of friends that one turns for advice and aid. She has little, if any, sense of the broader community on which she could rely.

She sees herself as having a reasonably secure financial position with her family at its present size. She worries about becoming pregnant again because of the added financial burden this would represent. If she did have another baby, she is not sure the family could manage without having to ask for help from her parents or her husband's parents. However, she feels that little can be done about this.

Her role is homemaker and wife, and her husband's role is provider. This is what both expected and this is what both will pursue, until or unless some other satisfactory alternative is presented. She feels uneasy outside the closely-knit group of police officers and their wives and will not venture into the world, where people are "different" and therefore threatening. Mary Ann is unaware of, and therefore disinterested in, the problems of people outside her circle. She sees her role as protecting what has been ordained for her — her family.

chapter six: implications of the study



In reviewing the reports from the nine case studies, we find that, although many women feel that they have been placed in roles which make them second-class citizens, those roles are changing. Fundamental values and traditions are under attack as cultural, emotional and economic changes occur and, for some time to come, “growing pains” will plague many Canadian women.

How, in fact, does the urban woman of today perceive her role? Does she feel ashamed if she wants to stay home and educate her children? Does she feel ashamed if she wants to work like her husband, father, brother and male friends? Can she choose her own lifestyle, and feel that she is contributing personally and directly to the improvement of the urban environment? The answers to these questions are fundamental to a

better quality of life in Canadian society, and particularly in urban society.

The traditional family, through which a woman had to find her identity in order to be recognized socially, has almost disappeared. This is largely the result of economic change and the resulting change in living patterns. In today's cities, it has become commonplace, if not entirely acceptable, for women to want to participate actively in shaping the environment in which they live.

As a result, the family unit is in the process of being reoriented, often with both parents participating in providing the children with opportunities to see and experience widely divergent lifestyles. It is clear that, in Canada, we are still going through the pains of encountering and accepting these changes in established moralities and attitudes.

In cities across Canada, women and women's groups, aware of their changing roles, are taking a stand on issues critical to the growth and expansion of the Canadian woman's independence — issues like public transportation, wage discrimination, daycare, recreation and leisure, birth control and housing. These women want to help change the milieu in which they are living in order to achieve the personal satisfaction and degree of independence they seek, as well as to improve the quality of life for all urban dwellers.

The issues and problems identified here, through the nine city case studies and the lifestyle vignettes, have virtually unlimited implications for the future of Canadian urban society. The vignettes in particular remind us that women are not a homogeneous

group, but include a great diversity of individuals, each with her own needs, desires, concerns and dreams. Although it would be impossible to explore here the implications of all the concerns identified in the case studies and the vignettes, some conclusions can be drawn. There follows, then, a brief discussion of the implications — for urban planning, for government policy and for the development of Canadian society as a whole — of women's concerns about the quality of urban life in Canada today.

Recommendations which were cast mainly in local terms have not been included here; they can be found in the reports for the individual cities (see Appendix, page 29).

Citizen Participation and Urban Planning

Each of the nine reports suggested that increased citizen participation in the planning process is vital if the quality of urban life is to be improved. It was emphasized that women, as a special interest group constituting more than half the population, must be consulted.

A logical outgrowth of such action would be, of course, that other interest groups be consulted as well, and token input (limited to concept generation and public meetings for the presentation of development options) will not be considered sufficient for any group in the very near future. Underlying many of the reports is an emerging sense in Canadian women of the right to act to enhance, direct and protect their own destinies. If this right is to be fulfilled, considerably more information will have to be furnished to the public, enabling more people to acquire the basis for meaningful participation in the planning process; at the same time, the channels which are

established to inform the public must, of necessity, be two-way communication systems, informing planners of the public view.

Information alone, however, is not enough. The public's thinking — the full range of citizens' viewpoints — must come to be considered as integral to the planning process as physical, economic and environmental considerations are now.

Once vehicles to accomplish these ends have been established, it is perhaps inevitable that the planning process will be slowed down: "expedient" change cannot take place so readily when the persons affected by proposed change have to be consulted. Nevertheless, the advantages of consultative planning for city development are seen to outweigh the disadvantages (although some reports suggested that the population at large is so accustomed to someone else making decisions for them that they would have to be actively required to participate in the planning process).

A reading of the nine city reports strongly suggests that women's needs and wishes must be researched and documented if the real balance between the physical and social-development needs of the Canadian public is to be known.

The city reports and the lifestyle vignettes also have important implications for a wide range of specific aspects of the urban environment: housing, health and education services, transportation modes — in fact, the entire relationship between the physical structure of the city and the well-being of individuals, families and social groupings of all kinds. But what seems paramount in the

reports is the belief that most of these aspects of urban planning will gain full discussion only with the development of effective citizen involvement, again emphasizing the vital need to open up the planning process to all individuals and groups in Canadian society, especially to women.

Government Policy and Legislation

Each of the nine city reports included recommendations for changes to existing legislation and for new legislation to alleviate specific problems. These recommendations have implications for federal, provincial and municipal levels of government.

In general, it was felt that a major review of existing laws should be conducted to ensure that women can, in fact, choose freely among alternative lifestyles. It was suggested that many choices are now denied to women because of a number of legal biases inhibiting their movement, options and decisions. In addition, freedom of choice for women is seen to be inhibited by unequal educational opportunities and discriminatory hiring practices. It was felt by many groups that only legislative action could bring about prompt change in such situations.

Some of the reports argued that both formal and informal government sanctions are needed to insure women the basic human right to make choices and to seek personal fulfillment. Included here are the right to have a voice in determining such physical aspects of the urban environment as housing and transportation systems. In a social sense, this right is the freedom to choose from diverse roles. Daycare facilities are seen to be critical in allowing women to explore options other than the traditional wife-mother role, and government subsidy

is considered vital to the establishment of adequate daycare facilities. In general, the reports reflected the view that government policy decisions should give careful consideration to allocating funds to projects with less physical emphasis and more social content.

In short, then, it is considered vital to the improvement of the quality of urban life that governments develop legislation and programs to increase the opportunities for choice by all segments of society, particularly by women.

Implications for Society

International Women's Year, and a general concern about women's views on a wide range of social issues, have provided the impetus for us to look at difficulties which have existed for some time, for both men and women, in an age which provides more and more free time and, for many, greater economic opportunity and mobility. Learning to deal with new freedoms when one's life pattern is already established is a difficult task. It is perhaps even more difficult to envision a future for one's children which may be totally unlike one's own. It is necessary to find a way to make a more comfortable transition from what was to what will be. Some of the nine reports expressed the view that this transition will be a rapid one, and can be accomplished primarily by legislative means. Others suggest that the transition will be slow and that the introduction of various alternative housing forms, new employment opportunities and social services will help to accomplish the transition. All the reports emphasize the importance of the Canadian people's acceptance of the right of others to make their own choices in society. This

change of attitude must take place before the problems presented by the physical environment can be solved.

Some of the city reports suggested that traditional roles, by their nature, are degrading, and therefore that pursuing the traditional lifestyle is a "cop-out". As can be seen in the vignettes and in some of the case study reports, however, there is far from a consensus among Canadian women that a change from traditionally accepted women's roles is necessary, or even desirable.

Many of the reports suggested that the continuity of history in an urban setting is necessary if the character of the community is to be maintained. Perhaps we can also look to the past for institutions which would provide alternatives needed today. The extended family, for example, provided a child with many models, but even the extended family could not guarantee children a sense of peace and satisfaction. And modern technology, more free time and mass media have created a world which is no longer insular, one where the extended family as an institution may no longer be possible. However, history offers many examples of change being less disturbing when it happens as a community-instigated activity. It is to be hoped that community interest groups, including women, will begin to share experiences with neighbourhoods unlike their own and to develop better communication links between neighbourhoods to help in this process.

Our society is in a state of evolution. It is to be hoped that this evolution, by whatever process it takes place, will enhance the right of all to pursue goals which will provide the greatest sense of satisfaction and accomplishment.

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